

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 25, 2001

The Honorable Ernest F. Hollings  
Chairman  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
Transportation  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman  
Chairman  
Committee on Governmental Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairmen Hollings and Lieberman:

Congratulations on your new positions. We look forward to working with you on issues of mutual interest and concern, such as the 2000 Census.

As you may know, in conducting the 2000 Decennial Census, the Census Bureau compiled two sets of data. One set is a population count determined through the use of Census forms returned by mail and interviews conducted at addresses for which no Census form was returned. Recognizing that this raw population count is not entirely accurate, the Bureau prepared a second set of data: the population count was enhanced using statistical techniques designed to correct for errors in the Census count. The Commerce Department released the first set of data on March 6, 2001, but has decided not to use or to release publicly the second set of data.

There are substantial questions about the accuracy of the 2000 Census data that the Commerce Department has chosen to release. According to news reports, the unadjusted numbers missed at least 6.4 million people and counted at least 3.1 million people twice.<sup>1</sup>

On March 1, 2001, the Census Bureau's Executive Steering Committee for Accuracy and Coverage Evaluation Policy made a recommendation about which set of data should be released to the public and to the states by April 1, 2001, for purposes of redistricting. Although the Steering Committee concluded that the adjusted numbers should not be released at that time for redistricting purposes, it reached this decision only because the pending April 1, 2001, statutory deadline prevented a full analysis of the accuracy of the adjusted data. In fact, the Steering Committee expressly found that "the majority

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<sup>1</sup>"Count of 2000 Census Said to Err by Millions." *New York Times* (March 16, 2001).

of the evidence indicates...the superior accuracy of the adjusted numbers."<sup>2</sup> The committee also found that "[q]uality measures indicate the adjusted data are more accurate overall."<sup>3</sup>

We have requested the corrected data from the Commerce Department, but have so far not received it. The data are important for several reasons. First, it could have an enormous impact on the allocation by Congress of more than \$185 billion per year in population-based federal grant funds. The General Accounting Office, using data from the 1990 Census and a statistical method similar to the one used for the 2000 Census, analyzed how the use of adjusted Census data in 1990 would have affected the distribution of federal resources. Examining a sample of 15 major programs that administer federal funds, GAO concluded that the use of corrected population counts would have changed the distribution of nearly \$450 million in federal funds each year.


The adjusted data also could have a significant effect on the appropriateness of congressional redistricting efforts currently being undertaken by the states. The reports that the Census Bureau missed 6.4 million people in its most recent count, mostly our nation's African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Pacific Americans, and American Indians, raise serious questions about whether or not all of our citizens will have an equal voice in government.


The refusal to provide the requested data is particularly troublesome in light of the Commerce Department's recent decision to try to put new limits on Congressional oversight of the Census. The Commerce Department is attempting to set conditions on Congressional access to Census information, particularly as it relates to evaluations of the Accuracy Coverage Evaluation.

Given these concerns and the importance of the issues at stake, some of us have filed litigation to obtain the corrected data. In addition, we are writing to request that you consider holding hearings on, or otherwise exercise the oversight powers of your committees to investigate the Commerce Department's refusal to release the corrected data.

Thank you for your kind attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

  
**CAROLYN B. MALONEY**  
Member of Congress

  
**WM. LACY CLAY**  
Ranking Member  
House Subcommittee on the Census

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<sup>2</sup>Report of Tabulations of Population to States and Localities Pursuant to Title 13 U.S.C., Section 141(c), and Availability of Other Population Information; the Executive Steering Committee for Accuracy and Coverage Evaluation Policy (ESCAP) Report; and the Census Bureau Director's Recommendation; Notice, 66 Fed. Reg. 14005 (2001) (*emphasis added*).

<sup>3</sup>*Id.* at 14006.



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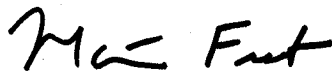
Hispanic Caucus, Census and Civil Rights  
Task Force



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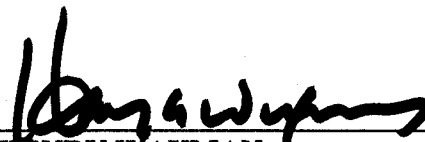
Congressional Black Caucus, Task Force on  
the Census



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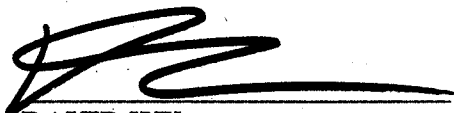
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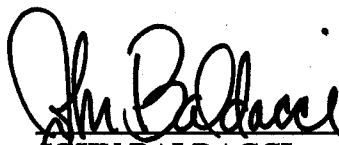
House Committee on Government Reform



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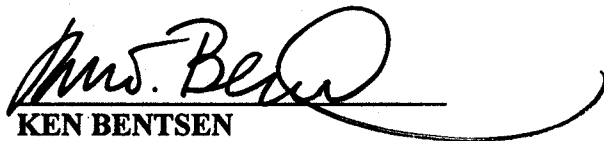
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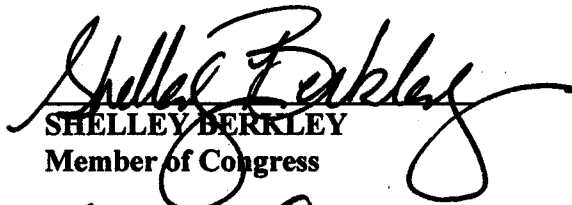
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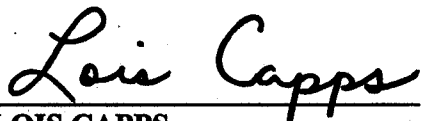
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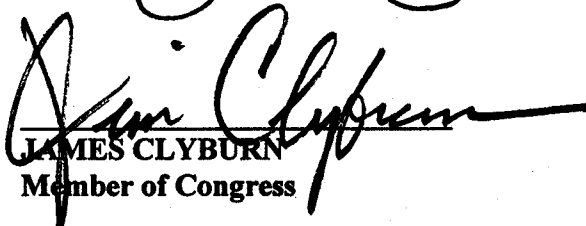
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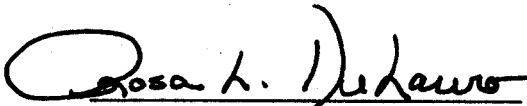
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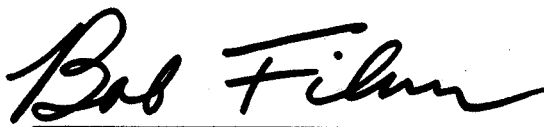


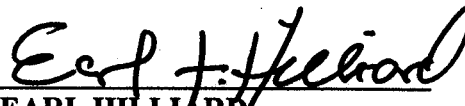
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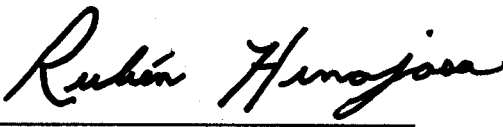
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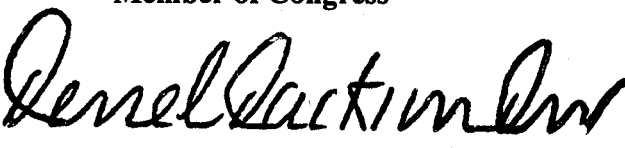
  
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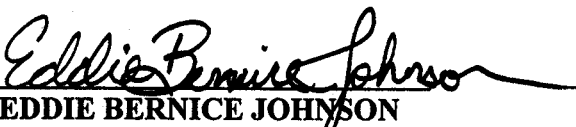
  
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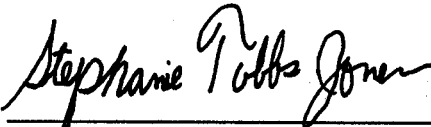
  
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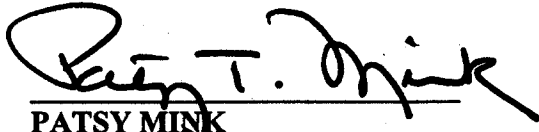
  
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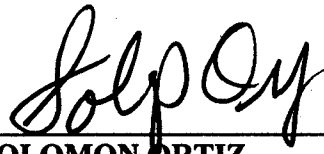
  
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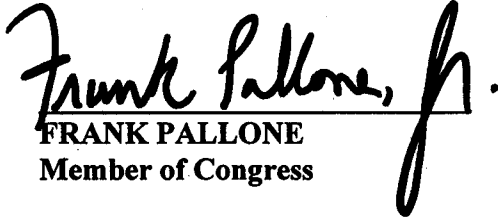
  
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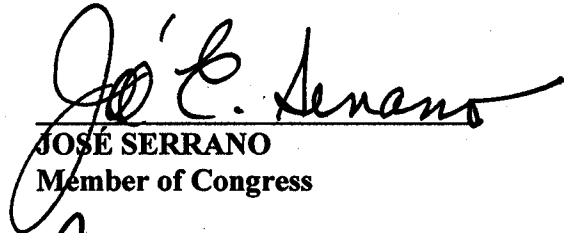
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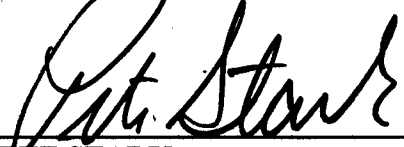
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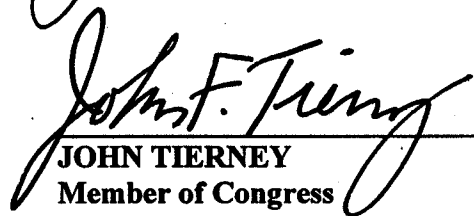
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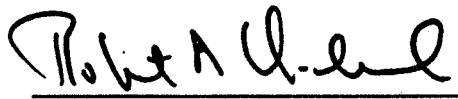
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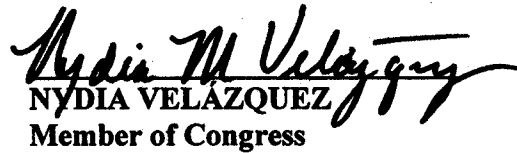
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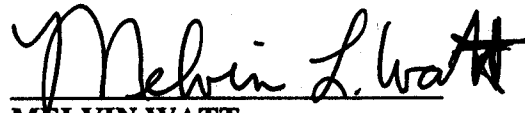
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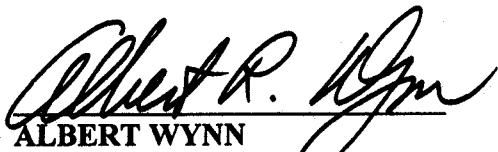
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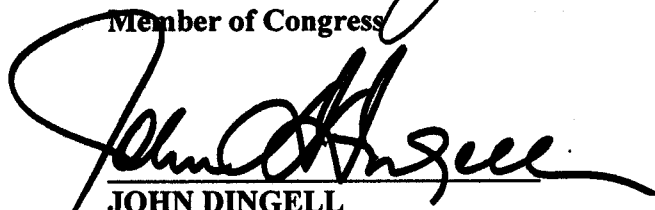
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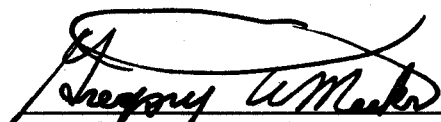



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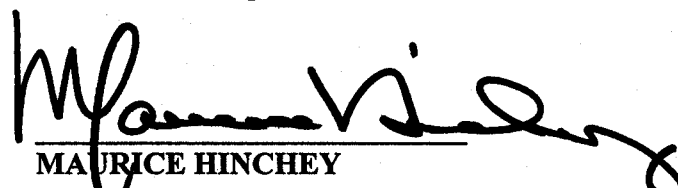
  
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cc: Senator Daschle  
Senator Kerry  
Senator Levin